

Business Briefs

Health

Soviet needles spread AIDS

Another cluster of pediatric AIDS cases has been discovered in Russia, apparently during routine screening.

Izvestia reported May 6 that seven children in Volgograd, hospitalized with lung problems, had been found to have AIDS. The diagnosis was made, according to regional health chief V. Shchuchkin, "during a planned study which is now being conducted."

Izvestia blamed the use of unsterilized syringes for the children's illness. This was the route of infection in the last reported AIDS cluster, at Elista.

The new report is evidence that the deadly disease is spreading far and wide in the Soviet Union. Elista is 150 miles south of Volgograd, which is the city on the southern Volga, formerly called Stalingrad.

Hunger

World food conference opens in Cairo

The World Food Council opened a four-day conference on hunger May 22 in Cairo, and was read a speech by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The conference was billed as dealing with the "political issues" behind hunger. The WFC is a U.N.-affiliated body formed in 1974, out of a conference in Rome, which Henry Kissinger attended as representative of the United States.

At least 512 million people have died of hunger so far this decade, asserted the Egyptian President, he stated in a prepared text read to the meeting on his behalf.

The industrialized nations should forgive some foreign debt of the Third World nations, in order to finance food projects, said Mubarak, as a key part of his message. "I hope your conference will be able to have contacts with the industrialized countries to give up a percentage of debts owed by the Third World countries to finance food projects."

Agriculture

New York loses 10.5% of its farms

The State of New York lost 10.5% of its farms over a five-year period, according to official data.

Based on a 1987 enumeration, the United States Census Bureau said, the number of farms in New York dropped from 42,206 in 1982 to 37,743 in 1987, a loss of 4,460 farms or 10.5%. The amount of land devoted to farming also declined by 800,000 acres.

Over the five-year period, most of the farms that went out of business were dairy farms. A New York State report showed that the number of milk cows on New York farms dropped by 54,250 head, or 6%, from 1987 to 1988.

Richard T. McGuire, the state Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets, said, "One conclusion I would not want people to draw is that farmers are going out of business because of falling income."

The Debt Bomb

Kennedy: Brady plan 'too little, too late'

At the end of a three-day visit to Mexico, Sen. Ted Kennedy gave a speech to a group of Mexican and American businessmen in Mexico City in which he called Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady's suggested 20% reduction in Ibero-American nations' annual debt payments "too little, too late." He said that the debt should be reduced by at least twice that over a six-year period.

Said the Massachusetts Democrat, "We cannot afford to err on the side of the banks, when the alternative is a nightmare of depression and upheaval. . . . The workers and the people of Mexico must no longer be required to shoulder the burden of the financial world's mistakes."

In the same speech, Kennedy called for an "Alliance Against Drugs." Trying to evoke his brother's "Alliance for Progress" program, Kennedy said, "It is time to stop

talking at each other about the supply problem in Mexico and the demand problem in the United States and start talking with each other about ways to deal with both problems."

Kennedy met with a number of political leaders over the three days, including former presidential candidates Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, a nationalist, and the fascist National Action Party (PAN)'s Manuel Clouthier. He praised President Carlos Salinas de Gortari for his six months in office, particularly for cracking down on drugs and "corruption." The latter was presumed to be a reference to the government's police-state action in breaking the oilworkers' union and arresting its leader, Joaquín Hernández Galicia.

Environmentalism

Sun responsible for 'global warming'

The Sun is responsible for higher temperatures on the surface of the Earth, not "greenhouse gases," according to Albert Arking, head of the climate and radiation branch of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center.

In a commentary in the May 23 *New York Times*, Arking argues that although "greenhouse gases" play an important role in moderating the Earth's temperature, the record does not indicate that greenhouse gases, added to industrial activities, have increased the temperature of the Earth.

He stated, "Stories in the news media give the impression that a consensus exists among scientists, and government scientists in particular, that the global warming of the 1980s is primarily the result of increased 'greenhouse' gases in the atmosphere. . . . There is strong evidence that another factor is having an important influence on our climate: solar activity. The recent upward trend in global temperatures has been the subject of intense scrutiny. The current warming trend goes back only 12 years, however. Before that, temperatures were decreasing or unvarying between 1940 and the late 1970s—although this period was one of strong growth in world energy consumption